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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-11 ISO-00 ACDA-05 EUR-12 NEAE-00

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 ORM-02

AID-05 EB-07 SAM-01 EA-07 /116 W
---------- 107726
P R 301645Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3764
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USUN NY 612

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, AG, LY, MO, SS
SUBJ: SAHARA: ALGERIANS LOSE ROUND I, LIBYAN CONNECTION EXPLOITED

1. MOROCCANS APPARENTLY PREVAIL IN SAHARA CLASH: MEDIA
JAN. 29-30 INDICATE THAT MOROCCANS WERE APPARENT WINNERS
IN CLASH WITH ALGERIAN COLUMN SAID TO HAVE BEEN ESCORTING FOOD
AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO AMGALA REFUGEE CAMP. MEDIA ACCOUNTS SAYS
ALGERIAN COLUMN DEFENDED ITSELF BRAVELY BEFORE WITHDRAWING
IN FACE OF INFINITELY SUPERIOR MOROCCAN FORCE. MOROCCANS
USED AVIATION, ARTILLERY AND TANKS IN OPERATION,
ACCORDING TO MEDIA. NEWS ACCOUNT ALSO MAKES IT CLEAR
THAT MOROCCANS HAVE OCCUPITED AMGALA.

2. LIBYAN CONNECTION: APS ANNOUNCED EARLY JAN. 30 THAT
LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER JALLUD HAD JUST LEFT ALGIERS AFTER
LONG DISCUSSIONS "ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS" WITH PRESIDENT
BOUMEDIENE. JALLUD ARRIVED HERE IN AFTERNOON JAN. 29.
MEDIA HERE HAVE MADE NO MENTION OF REPORT (TRIPOLI 0119
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NOTAL AND LE MONDE JAN. 29) THAT NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR

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GENERAL AND COUNCIL OF REVILUTION MEMBER COL. AHMED
DRAIA HAD BEEN IN TRIPOLI JAN. 27. HIS APPARENT ABSENCE
FROM COUNCIL OF REVILUTION SESSION JAN. 27 SUPPORTS
CONCLUSION THAT HE WAS IN FACT IN LIBYA.

3. GENOCIDE THEME STRESSED: MEDIA HAVE CONTINUED TO
GIVE HEAVY PLAY TO CHARGES OF GENOCIDE BY MOROCCANS
AGAINST SAHRAOUIS. JAN. 30 PRESS RREPORT CLAIMS THAT
UNHCR MISSION WHICH VISITED HERE IN MID-DECEMBER
HAS TERMED SITUATION IN SAHARA "ETHNOCIDE." GRISLY
FILM OF SAHARA REFUGEE CAMPS, ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN MADE
BY SAHRAOUI RED CROSS, WAS SHOWN ON TV HERE JAN. 29.
FINALLY, ACCORDING TO APS, SPANISH NEWS AGENCY PYRESA
HAS REPORTED RED CROSS STATEMENT THAT MOROCCANS ATTACKED
SAHARA REFUGEE CAMPS WITH NAPALM.

4. MEDIATION: WE CAN OBTAIN NO CONFIRMATION OF RUMORS,
WHICH WE UNDERSTAND UPI REPORTS TO BE CIRCULATING IN
ALGIERS AND RABAT, THAT GOA AND GOM HAVE AGREED TO
WITHDRAW FORCES TO GIVE UNNAMED ARAB MEDIATORS OPPORTUNITY
TO RESOLVE CONFLICT PEACEFULLY.

5. OTHER RUMORS DENIED: ALGERIAN RADIO JAN. 30 REPORTS
DENIAL FROM HANOI THAT THERE WERE VIETNAMESE FIGHTING
ON SIDE OF POLISARIO IN SAHARA. RADIO ALSO CARRIED DENIAL
FROM ALGERIAN TRANSPORT MINISTRY THAT ALGERIAN AIRPORTS
HAD BEEN CLOSED FOR MILITARY REASONS. CONSTANTINE AIRPORT,
ACCORDING TO TRANSPORT MINISTRY, WAS CLOSED JAN. 27-8
BECAUSE OF HEAVY SNOW (GIVEN CURRENT ALGERIAN WEATHER THIS IS
REASONABLE EXPLANATION).

6. COMMENT: RAPID DEFEAT OF ALGERIAN FORCE AT AMGALA,
AND WHAT APPEARS TO BE SUBSEQUENT PAUSE IN FIGHTING,
SUGGEST THAT GOA MAY NOT HAVE MADE CONTINGENCY PLAN TO
COVER EVENTUALITY OF FORC'S BEING HIT BY STRONGER MOROCCAN
UNIT. IT MAY BE, HOWEVER, THAT REGIME EXPECTED
ATTACK AT SOME POINT BUT HAD DECIDED IN ADVANCE THAT IT
WOULD NOT MOVE TO WIDEN CONFLICT PRIOR TO TAKING DIPLOMATIC
SOUNDINGS.

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7. ALGERIANS MAY HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO ANNOUNCE DRAIA'S
TRIPOLI VISIT IN ORDER NOT TO BE EMBARRASSED SHOULD
LIBYANS NOT HAVE RESPONDED TO INITIATIVE. GIVEN LIBYAN
PRESS REPORT THAT JALLUD WAS HERE ON JAN. 28 (TRIPOLI 126
NOTAL, APPEARS THAT LIBYAN PREMIER HAS BEEN IN PERPETUAL
MOTION DURING LAST 48 HOURS.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT AND/OR GENEVA

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ADVISE US TELEGRAPHICALLY WHETHER UNHCR HAS GONE ON
RECORD WITH "ETHNOCIDE" CHARGE AND IF RED CROSS HAS
ECHOED ACCUSATION THAT MOROCCANS USED NAPALM IN
SAHARA.
LYNE

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